

## Seafish Insight: Fishing references by country in 2016 TIP report

The Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report is the U.S. Government's principal diplomatic tool to engage foreign governments on human trafficking. It is also the world's most comprehensive resource of governmental anti-human trafficking efforts. The U.S. Department of State Trafficking in Persons report (TIP) 2016 was published on 30 June 2016. <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/>

Seafish Insight: A quick analysis of the 2016 TIP report shows:

- Fish or fishing is mentioned in association with forced labour in 51 countries.
- Countries that have been singled out specifically with regards to fishing include Burma (dropped from Tier 2 Watch to Tier 3), Cambodia (improved from Tier 2 Watch list to Tier 2), Fiji, Indonesia, Ireland, Seychelles (dropped from Tier 2 to Tier 2 Watch list), Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand.
- Thailand has been promoted to the Tier 2 'Watch List', having been on the lowest rung, Tier 3, since 2014. The Government of Thailand does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so....Exploitative labor practices in the fishing industry, however, remained a significant issue, partly exacerbated by weak law enforcement, delays to hold business owners or boat captains criminally accountable, nascent efforts to improve data linkage among relevant agencies, and fragmented coordination among regulatory agencies.
- Burma, Haiti and Papua New Guinea (PNG) were relegated to Tier 3.
- Human trafficking in the seafood industry is not just confined to Southeast Asia.

### Fishing references by country in 2016 TIP report (alphabetical)

#### Bangladesh – Tier 2 (same as 2015)

Rohingya and Bangladeshi migrants who travel by boat to Southeast Asian countries are subject to starvation, assault, abduction, and ransom demands—some migrants who are not able to pay ransom are sold into forced labor, primarily on **fishing** boats.

#### Belize – Tier 3 (same as 2015)

Some migrants are subjected to forced labor in restaurants, shops, agriculture, and **fishing** or to sex trafficking. Trafficking-related complicity by government officials, including those at high levels, remains a problem.

#### Burma – Tier 3 (downgraded from Tier 2 Watch in 2015)

Some Burmese men, women, and children who migrate for work abroad - particularly to Thailand and China, as well as other countries in Asia, the Middle East, and the United States—are subjected to forced labor or sex trafficking. Men are subjected to forced labor in **fishing**, manufacturing, forestry, agriculture, and construction abroad. NGOs report a continued increase in the number of Burmese males transiting Thailand en route to Indonesia and Malaysia, where they are subjected to forced labor, primarily in fishing and other labor intensive industries.

**Some Burmese men in the Thai fishing industry are subjected to debt bondage, passport confiscation, threats of physical or financial harm, or fraudulent recruitment; some are also subjected to physical abuse and forced to remain aboard vessels in international waters for years. The government sent a delegation to Indonesia to advocate for victim screening and repatriation—conducted by an international organization—of more than 1,000 Burmese victims of forced labor on fishing vessels, and made efforts to provide limited reintegration assistance upon their return. Overall victim identification and protection, however, remained weak and a lack of adequate services left victims highly vulnerable to retrafficking.**

#### **Burundi – Tier 3 (same as 2015)**

Children and young adults are coerced into forced labor on plantations or small farms throughout Burundi, in gold mines in Cibitoke, in informal commerce in the streets of larger cities, collecting river stones for construction in Bujumbura, and in the **fishing** industry.

#### **Cambodia – Tier 2 (upgraded from Tier 2 Watch in 2015)**

Cambodian adults and children migrate to other countries within the region and increasingly to the Middle East for work; many are subjected to forced labor on **fishing** vessels, in agriculture, in construction, in factories, and in domestic servitude—often through debt bondage—or to sex trafficking, and forced begging or street vending in Thailand and Vietnam.

**Significant numbers of male Cambodians continued to be recruited in Thailand for work on fishing boats and subjected to forced labor on Thai-owned vessels in international waters. Cambodian victims escaping this form of exploitation have been identified in Malaysia, Indonesia, Mauritius, Fiji, Senegal, South Africa, and Papua New Guinea. Cambodian men reported severe abuses by Thai captains, deceptive recruitment, underpaid wages, and being forced to remain aboard vessels for years.**

#### **Cameroon – Tier 2 Watch list (downgraded from Tier 2 in 2015)**

Cameroonian children are exploited in domestic service, restaurants, begging or vending on streets and highways, artisanal gold mining, gravel quarries, **fishing**, animal breeding, and agriculture (on onion, cotton, tea and cocoa plantations), as well as in urban transportation assisting bus drivers and construction as errand boys, laborers, or night watchmen.

#### **Comoros – Tier 3 (same as 2015)**

Children on Anjouan, some of whom were abandoned by parents who left to seek economic opportunities in other countries, are subjected to forced labor, mostly in domestic service, roadside and market vending, baking, **fishing**, and agriculture.

#### **Congo – Tier 2 Watch List (same as 2015)**

Some child trafficking victims are also subjected to forced labor in stone quarries, bakeries, and the **fishing** and agricultural sectors, including in cocoa fields in Sangha department.

### **Costa Rica – Tier 2 Watch List (same as 2015)**

Men and children from other Central American and Asian countries are subjected to forced labor in Costa Rica, particularly in the agriculture, construction, **fishing**, and commercial sectors.

### **Fiji – Tier 2 (same as 2015)**

**Workers from other Asian countries are subjected to forced labor on fishing vessels and transit through Fiji or board fishing vessels from Fiji ports and waters. They live in poor conditions, accrue significant debts, and work for little or no compensation on foreign fishing vessels, mainly Chinese- and Taiwan-flagged, in Pacific waters. South Asian and East Asian men are fraudulently recruited to work in Fiji and find themselves in conditions of forced labor upon arrival.**

### **Gabon – Tier 2 Watch List (same as 2015)**

Boys are forced to work as street vendors, mechanics, or in the **fishing** sector.

### **Ghana – Tier 2 Watch List (same as 2015)**

Ghanaian boys and girls are subjected to forced labor within the country in **fishing**, domestic service, street hawking, begging, portering, artisanal gold mining, quarrying, herding, and agriculture.

### **Haiti – Tier 3 (downgraded from Tier 2 Watch List in 2015)**

Other vulnerable populations include Haitian children working in construction, agriculture, fisheries, domestic work, and street vending in Haiti and the Dominican Republic

### **Honduras – Tier 2 (same as 2015)**

Children from indigenous and Afro-descendant communities, particularly Miskito boys, are vulnerable to forced labor, including on **fishing** vessels.

### **Iceland – Tier 1 (same as 2015)**

Men and women from Africa, Eastern Europe, South America, and South and East Asia are subjected to forced labor in construction, tourism, restaurants, **fish factories**, and as au pairs in private houses.

### **India – Tier 2 (same as 2015)**

Within India, some are subjected to forced labor in sectors such as construction, steel, and textile industries; wire manufacturing for underground cables; biscuit factories; pickling; floriculture; **fish farms**; and ship breaking.

### **Indonesia – Tier 2 (same as 2015)**

A significant number of Indonesian migrant workers face forced labor, including debt bondage, in Asia, the Middle East, and on **fishing** vessels.

Reports continue of Indonesian fishermen in forced labor on Taiwanese and South Korean fishing vessels in non-Indonesian waters. In past years, Indonesian men have been subjected to forced labor on fishing vessels in Indonesian waters. The government reported a significant number of foreign men in forced labor on fishing vessels in Indonesian waters, including from Burma, Cambodia, and Thailand; most of the vessels belong to Thai parent companies that operate under the auspices of Thai-Indonesian shell companies. Thai traffickers issue fake Thai identity documents to foreign workers and force them to fish in Indonesian waters, threatening to expose their fake identities if they contact Indonesian authorities. Thai-Indonesian shell companies based in fishing ports in eastern Indonesia perpetuate these abuses by prohibiting fishermen from leaving their vessels or detaining them on land in makeshift prisons after the government's 2014 moratorium on foreign fishing vessels grounded many of the men's ships in port.

In Indonesia, women, men, and children are exploited in forced labor in fishing, fish processing, and construction. In one case the government convicted eight traffickers for forced labor on fishing vessels, but it did not initiate any other prosecutions for trafficking offenses in the fishing industry, despite the identification of over 1,500 trafficking victims in that sector.

To standardize inspection procedures, the fisheries minister—with NGO support—drafted and adopted a ministerial regulation in October 2015 establishing government-wide protocols for inspecting fishing vessels and screening for trafficking victims among crews, but they were not uniformly implemented during the reporting period. The government continued to work with NGOs to identify trafficking victims from among the crews of ships grounded or destroyed in the government's December 2014 crackdown on fishing vessels operating illegally in Indonesian waters, including victims stranded or detained on the island of Benjina. An international organization reported that with the government, it identified approximately 1,500 men exploited in forced labor in the fishing sector. An NGO also identified 97 forced labor victims—80 in domestic servitude, 10 in factories, and seven on plantations. The same international organization provided services to 1,322 trafficking victims referred by government agencies, NGOs, lawyers, and foreign embassies; the NGO then referred more than 1,126 of those victims back for shelter and health services, the majority of which were government-run or received some government funding.

### **Ireland – Tier 1 (same as 2015)**

Media reports claimed undocumented Ghanaian, Filipino, Egyptian, and Indian migrant workers were routinely subjected to exploitative labor and possibly trafficking for forced labor on Irish trawlers, and were subject to passport retention, denial of freedom of movement, severe sleep deprivation, verbal and physical abuse, and dangerous working practices. The government identified one victim of labor trafficking in the fishing industry. The government identified the maritime industry as a potentially high risk area for human trafficking. The agriculture department established an interdepartmental taskforce, including representatives from civil society, charged with monitoring and oversight of the industry, and eliminating forced labor vulnerabilities. Ireland participates in an international group of senior law enforcement officials and Catholic bishops working with civil society to eradicate human trafficking; and leads a project focused on the

**fisheries industry in the North Atlantic, which carried out several law enforcement investigations and inspections in 2015, one of which led to the identification of a non-EU labor trafficking victim in the Irish fishing industry. The case was under investigation at the close of the reporting period, and the victim received victim services from the government and NGOs.**

### **Israel – Tier 1 (same as 2015)**

Migrant workers primarily from Asia, Eastern Europe, and West Africa migrate to Israel for temporary contract labor in construction, agriculture, caregiving, and **fishing**; some of these workers are subjected to forced labor. In 2013, men from the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and India worked on **fishing** boats under harsh conditions, some of which constitute human trafficking, distinguished by isolation, long working hours, and withheld salaries.

### **Jamaica – Tier 2 (upgraded from Tier 2 Watch List in 2015)**

Foreign nationals are subjected to forced labor in Jamaica and aboard foreign-flagged **fishing** vessels operating in Jamaican waters.

### **Kenya – Tier 2 (same as 2015)**

Within the country, children are subjected to forced labor in domestic service, agriculture, **fishing**, cattle herding, street vending, and begging.

### **Kiribati – Tier 2 Watch list (downgraded from Tier 2 in 2015)**

The government did not conduct any investigations in 2015, compared to zero investigations in 2014 and two investigations conducted against foreign fishing vessel owners in 2013.

### **Laos – Tier 2 Watch List (same as 2015)**

Lao men and boys are victims of forced labor in Thailand's **fishing**, construction, and agricultural industries. Lao victims of forced labor in the Thai **fishing** industry have been identified in Indonesian waters.

### **Madagascar Tier 2 (same as 2015)**

Malagasy children, mostly from rural and coastal regions, and from impoverished families in urban areas, are exploited in prostitution, domestic servitude, and forced labor in mining, **fishing**, and agriculture across the country. Malagasy men were subjected to forced labor aboard Chinese-flagged **fishing** vessels in South Africa's territorial waters in the previous reporting period, and increasingly are subjected to domestic servitude in China.

### **Malawi – Tier 2 (same as 2015)**

Children are also subjected to forced labor in begging, small businesses, and potentially in the **fishing** industry.

### **Malaysia – Tier 2 Watch List (same as 2015)**

In previous years, some forced labor victims—such as Cambodian and Burmese men on Thai **fishing** boats in Malaysian waters—escaped their traffickers in Malaysian territory.

### **Marshall Islands Tier 3 (same as 2015)**

RMI girls are recruited by foreign business owners to engage in prostitution with crew members of foreign **fishing** and transshipping vessels that dock in Majuro. Some of these foreign fishermen may themselves be subject to conditions indicative of forced labor on ships in Marshallese waters.

### **Mauritius – Tier 2 (upgraded from Tier 2 Watch List in 2015)**

Cambodian fishermen were subjected to forced labor on foreign **fishing** boats in Mauritius' territorial waters.

### **Micronesia – Tier 2 (same as 2015)**

Girls are allegedly exploited in prostitution by crew members of docked Asian **fishing** vessels. Foreign migrants from Southeast Asian countries report working in conditions indicative of human trafficking on Asian **fishing** vessels in FSM or its territorial waters.

### **Mongolia – Tier 2 (same as 2015)**

North Korean and Chinese workers employed in Mongolia are vulnerable to trafficking as contract laborers in construction, production, agriculture, forestry, **fishing**, hunting, wholesale and retail trade, automobile maintenance, and mining.

### **Namibia – Tier 2 (upgraded from Tier 2 Watch List in 2015)**

Children from Angola, Zambia, and Zimbabwe may be subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor in the **fishing** sector.

### **New Zealand – Tier 1 (same as 2015)**

Foreign men aboard foreign-flagged **fishing** vessels in New Zealand waters are subjected to forced labor.

The government continued to implement the Fisheries Foreign Charter Vessels Amendments, scheduled to come into full effect May 1, 2016, which led two **fishing** vessels considered at high risk of labor exploitation to choose not to renew their licenses to fish in New Zealand waters to avoid the additional scrutiny. The government expanded compliance checks to ensure work contracts matched those used to apply for work visas and met legal standards. The government, however, did not consistently identify trafficking victims in vulnerable sectors and continued to treat possible forced labor cases as labor violations.

### **Palau Tier 2 (same as 2015)**

Foreign workers on **fishing** boats in Palau waters experience conditions indicative of human trafficking.

### **Papua New Guinea Tier 3 (downgraded from Tier 2 Watch list in 2015)**

Foreign and local men are subjected to forced labor in logging and mining camps as well as on **fishing** vessels operating in Papua New Guinea's exclusive economic zone. 20 men and one boy from Burma, Cambodia, and Vietnam were subjected to forced labor on **fishing** vessels.

### **Pakistan – Tier 2 Watch List (same as 2015)**

The country's largest human trafficking problem is bonded labor, in which an initial debt assumed by a worker as part of the terms of employment is exploited, ultimately entrapping other family members, sometimes for generations. Bonded labor is concentrated in Sindh and Punjab provinces, but also occurs in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces, in agriculture and brick-making and, to a lesser extent, in **fisheries**, mining, and carpet-making.

### **Philippines – Tier 1 (upgraded from Tier 2 in 2015)**

An estimated 10 million Filipinos work abroad, and a significant number of these migrant workers are subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor—predominantly via debt bondage—in the **fishing**, shipping, construction, education, nursing, and agricultural industries, as well as in domestic work, janitorial service, and other hospitality-related jobs, particularly across the Middle East, Asia, and North America.

### **Seychelles – Tier 2 Watch List (downgraded from Tier 2 in 2015)**

Migrant workers—including those from China, Kenya, Madagascar, and various countries in South Asia—make up 20 percent of the working population in Seychelles and are primarily employed in **fishing** and construction. NGOs report migrant workers face exploitative conditions in fish processing plants, and fishermen aboard foreign-flagged **fishing** vessels in Seychelles' territorial waters and ports are subjected to abuses indicative of forced labor, including non-payment of wages and physical abuse.

### **Sierra Leone – Tier 2 (same as 2015)**

Trafficking victims may also be found in the **fishing** and agricultural sectors

### **Singapore – Tier 2 (same as 2015)**

Singapore is a destination country for men, women, and girls from other Asian countries subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor, and a transit country for Cambodian and Filipino men subjected to forced labor on **fishing** vessels that transit through Singapore or its territorial waters.

Singapore is a destination country for men, women, and girls from other Asian countries subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor, and a transit country for Cambodian and Filipino men subjected to forced labor on **fishing vessels** that stop at ports in Singapore. **Men are subjected to forced labor on long-haul fishing vessels that depart from Singapore or dock in Singaporean ports; some agencies in Singapore use deceptive tactics to recruit Filipino and Cambodian men for this work. Some foreign seamen reportedly suffer severe abuse by fishing boat captains, the inability to disembark from their vessels—sometimes for years—the inability to terminate their contracts, and non-payment of wages. Some of these men transit Singapore before embarking onto vessels from ports in other countries.**

### **Solomon Islands – Tier 2 Watch List (same as 2015)**

Fishing crew members from Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, and Fiji have reported situations indicative of human trafficking, including non-payment of wages, severe living conditions, violence, and limited food supply on Taiwan-flagged **fishing** vessels in the Solomon Islands’ territorial waters and ports.

### **South Africa – Tier 2 (same as 2015)**

Foreign male forced labor victims were discovered aboard **fishing** vessels in South Africa’s territorial waters; NGOs estimated 10 to 15 victims of labor trafficking each month disembarked in Cape Town.

### **South Korea (Republic of Korea ROK) – Tier 1 (same as 2015)**

Approximately 500,000 low-skilled migrant workers, many employed under the government’s employment permit system, work in fishing, agriculture, livestock. The ROK is a transit point for Southeast Asian fishermen subjected to forced labor on **fishing** ships bound for Fiji and other ports in the Pacific.

### **Suriname – Tier 3 (worse - Tier 2 Watch List in 2015)**

Migrant workers in agriculture and on **fishing** boats off Suriname’s coast are highly vulnerable to forced labor, as are children working in gold mines and informal urban sectors.

### **Taiwan – Tier 1 (same as 2015)**

Most of Taiwan’s more than 587,000 migrant workers are hired in their home countries through recruitment agencies and brokers, some of which are from Taiwan, to perform low-skilled work as home caregivers and domestic workers, or in farming, manufacturing, construction, and **fishing** industries.

**Documented and undocumented fishermen on Taiwan-flagged fishing vessels, mostly from China, Indonesia, and Vietnam, experience non- or under-payment of wages, long working hours, physical abuse, lack of food, and poor living conditions, which are indicators of trafficking.**



**Under the criminal code, authorities initiated prosecutions against 50 alleged traffickers, compared with nine in 2014. In 2014 a Cambodian court convicted six Taiwan nationals for enslaving 74 Cambodians onboard Taiwan fishing vessels, but at the end of the reporting period Taiwan's investigation was still underway, and Taiwan authorities had not convicted any traffickers associated with this case (five of the six remained at-large in Taiwan)**

### **Tanzania – Tier 2 Watch List (same as 2015)**

Boys are subjected to forced labor on farms—including as cattle herders and occasionally as hunters—and in mines and quarries, the informal commercial sector, and on **fishing** vessels operating on the high seas.

### **Thailand – Tier 2 Watch list (upgraded from Tier 3 in 2015)**

Some labor trafficking victims are exploited in commercial **fishing** and related industries, factories, agriculture, and domestic work, or forced into street begging.

**Trafficking in the fishing industry remains a significant concern. Thai, Burmese, Cambodian, and Indonesian men are subject to forced labor on Thai and foreign-owned fishing boats. Some remain at sea for several years, are paid very little or irregularly, work as much as 18 to 20 hours per day for seven days a week, or are reportedly threatened, physically beaten, drugged to work longer, and even killed for becoming ill, attempting to escape, or disobeying orders. Some trafficking victims in the fishing sector had difficulty returning home due to isolated workplaces, unpaid wages, and the lack of legitimate identity documents or safe means to travel.**

**The government investigated ship owners, captains, and brokers for labor trafficking in the fishing industry in 41 cases, with 31 vessels seized; 24 of the cases related to the Indonesian islands of Ambon and Benjina in which the government issued arrest warrants for 98 suspects, 19 of whom have been arrested. Most cases remain under prosecution, but in one case the criminal court sentenced one broker to 12 years and six months' imprisonment. Of the 1,476 Thai workers who returned to Thailand from Indonesia, the government identified 57 trafficking victims and assisted 150 workers subjected to wage violations; however, companies reportedly sent home others to avoid allegations of trafficking.**

### **Timor Leste – Tier 2 (upgraded from Tier 2 Watch List in 2015)**

There were no formal procedures for victim identification, and authorities did not systematically screen for trafficking indicators among vulnerable groups, such as individuals in prostitution and domestic work and migrant workers on **fishing** vessels.

### **Uganda – Tier 2 (same as 2015)**

Ugandan children as young as 7 years old are exploited in forced labor in the country in agriculture, **fishing**

### United Kingdom – Tier 1 (same as 2015)

Migrant workers in the UK are subjected to forced labor in agriculture cannabis cultivation, construction, food processing, factories, domestic service, nail salons, food services, car washes, and on **fishing boats**.

### United State of America – Tier 1 (same as 2015)

Trafficking occurs in both legal and illicit industries, including in commercial sex, hospitality, sales crews, agriculture, **fishing**, manufacturing, janitorial services, construction, restaurants, health and elder care, salon services, fairs and carnivals, peddling and begging, and domestic service.

### Vietnam – Tier 2 (same as 2015)

Some victims are subjected to forced labor in the construction, **fishing**, agricultural, mining, logging, and manufacturing sectors, primarily in Taiwan, Malaysia, Republic of Korea, Laos, Angola, United Arab Emirates, and Japan.

*This is an information service provided by Seafish for industry and key stakeholders. To the best of our knowledge this information is factually correct at the date of publication.*

#### **For further information contact:**

Karen Green, Industry Issues and Communications, Seafish

**T:** +44 (0) 1480 431500   **M:** +44 (0) 7515 993499   **E:** [karen.green@seafish.co.uk](mailto:karen.green@seafish.co.uk)

---

Seafish Industry Authority, Origin  
Way, Europarc, Grimsby, DN37 9TZ

**T:** 01472 252300  
**W:** [www.seafish.org](http://www.seafish.org)

*Our mission: supporting a profitable,  
sustainable and socially responsible  
future for the seafood industry*